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Poultry and Products

EU proposes new Directive to enhance the control of Avian Influenza (AI)

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Report Highlights:

On April 28, the EC has proposed a new Directive that will expand mandatory surveillance of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) to Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) strains, which have the potential to mutate into HPAI strains. These new measures are due to be implemented by January 2007 by Member States. This will add a yearly cost of €3-8 million to the EU budget for animal diseases.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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[E3]

A New Directive

On April 28, 2005, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new Council Directive¹ to enhance the measures for the control of Avian Influenza (AI). This new Directive is meant to replace the existing Directive 92/40/EEC, which established compulsory disease control measures for Highly Pathogenic AI (HPAI). This new Directive will also require compulsory surveillance for Low Pathogenic AI (LPAI) in all Member States (MS).

The main features of the proposed Directive are:

1. Change in the definition of AI to extend the scope of the control measures to those LPAI viruses which could potentially mutate into HPAI viruses, making a distinction between the two conditions to be able to apply specific control measures considering the different risks posed by these viruses.
2. Introduction of compulsory surveillance for LPAI in all MS.
3. New and more flexible provisions on vaccination.
4. New and flexible provisions for the control of LPAI and HPAI in domestic birds other than poultry, such as birds kept in zoos or endangered species.
5. New provisions to ensure co-operation between MSs veterinary and public health authorities in case of an AI outbreak, with the view of protecting human health.
6. Attribution to the Commission to adopt further and more specific AI control measures and to establish an AI vaccine bank.

The new rules are scheduled for implementation by January 2007 and will add an additional annual cost of between €3-8 million to the EU budget for animal diseases. This new Directive should match the new Chapter of the OIE code, which is to be adopted in May 2005.

The Directive doesn't refer to any changes in import requirements for poultry products from third countries, including the United States. This Directive could however effect testing on imports. This Directive could affect U.S. exports of hatching eggs and other egg products.

Background

In the last five years, two major outbreaks of HPAI occurred in the EU; in Italy (1999-2000) and in The Netherlands, with secondary spread to Belgium and Germany (2003). Estimates of the expenditure incurred to compensate for the stamping out measures and for cleansing and disinfections from these two outbreaks range between €101 and €174 million, not including the cost to the whole poultry industry. It is believed that the proposed measures would have prevented at least one of the outbreaks.

In recent years, the number of AI outbreaks has increased significantly in the world. Especially, the ongoing outbreaks of HPAI from H5N1 virus strains throughout South-East Asia have alarmed international organizations such as FAO, WHO and OIE, because of the potential risk for a human influenza pandemic. Already, this animal health problem is estimated to have turned into a serious human health concern, which needs increased attention.

1

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/avian/directive_avian_en.pdf

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